

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

JANUARY, 1942

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SIXPENCE

## PRIORITY

THERE CAN be little doubt that the British Government is now making a more widespread use of the film than has ever been attempted by any other public body in the world. For this condition of things the British documentary movement can take some part of the credit. After two and a half years of war and two and a half years of campaigning for the full recognition of the film as a war-weapon film makers may regard with some satisfaction the volume of official production now in hand. Films are being made or sponsored by the Army, the Navy, the R.A.F. The Ministry of Information is having films made on its own behalf and on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Home Security, the Board of Education, the Ministry of Food, the Mines Department, the Ministry of Labour, the Colonial Office and the National Fire Service. Films are being made by such semi-official bodies as the British Council and the National Savings Committee. In addition a number of other official bodies are making use of the film for private record purposes.

Thus 1939, 1940 and 1941 have seen waged a successful campaign to promote the use of the film: 1942 should mark the opening of a second and a complementary campaign, a campaign for efficient, intelligent and co-ordinated production. It is not enough for the Government to produce a lot of films: it is necessary for the Government to ensure that the nation's film making power is directed into the most useful channels and that these channels provide for the national propaganda and instructional needs in the most efficient possible way. For the supply of films cannot be unlimited. Already there is competition amongst official sponsors for the services of the more efficient units, and it is not always the least valuable subjects which are abandoned because of lack of available production facilities.

The crying need is for organisation and co-ordinating control. Film-workers everywhere are demanding that the Government take steps to make more efficient use of their industry. The recent publication by the Association of Cine Technicians of a report on how greater efficiency may be attained represents a step of considerable significance. The labour interests in the industry are not only anxious to pull their weight in the war effort; they are determined to do so, and they see no reason to remain silent in face of inefficiencies caused by employers or official sponsors. They see no good reason why units, facilities and materials badly needed for official films should be employed upon commercial advertising films; nor do they understand why directors must stand idle for weeks ear-marked for the production of urgent official films whose Whitehall sponsors cannot decide upon the propaganda line to be followed.

The Association of Cine-Technicians has listed its complaints and

suggestions and most of these will come as no surprise to readers of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER. However strongly some sections of the employers may resent this tactless probing into the war effort, it is a significant and a necessary development that labour should play a more active part in the organisation of film propaganda. It is, moreover, a step in the direction of that socialisation of industry which must become more and more openly accepted as the war progresses. Yet labour must do more than demand increased efficiency from employers and sponsors. It must take a greater measure of responsibility for its own efficiency. In the studios the time has come for labour to question the national value of much of its work and to take necessary action to prevent the frittering away of production power. In shorts production labour must look more critically at its own professional contribution to the welter of films in hand. Many documentary film-makers have become so used to blaming their sponsors that they are frequently blind to production opportunities which they themselves waste.

It is the task of the documentary movement continually to force up its standards of efficiency, speed and quality. It is the task of the competing host of official sponsors to see that national advantage is taken of efficiency, speed and quality and to see, moreover, that documentary's unique experience in propaganda and instructional method—as distinct from film-making—is fully utilised. The varied official demands will never be satisfactorily met without some means of co-ordinating competing needs. Already shortages not only of staff but of equipment are becoming serious. Already the Services are beginning to use their powers to commandeer production equipment and so put it beyond reach of Civil Departments—a course of action which may well be against the national interest. Production bottle-necks at the labs. and in types of specialised film—such as the making of animated diagrams—are holding up important work. Who is to decide whether an instructional film for the Army or a propaganda film for the Ministry of Information shall have priority?

It becomes apparent that what is required is a co-ordinator of all film work undertaken in the national interest who will have power at least equal to that of an Under-Secretary of State. It would be his responsibility to review the film production machinery available, to co-ordinate and appraise the requirements of all official users, to establish production priorities and, by virtue of his control over personnel, equipment and raw materials, to ensure that approved production proceeds smoothly. Such a position can only be filled by an expert in the field of propaganda; it is not merely an administrative job, but one which calls for creative ability backed by knowledge and authority.

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

OUR NEW YEAR issue appears in a new format, due, as you may readily guess, to the paper shortage. By using a three-column layout throughout the paper (other than the front page) we have succeeded in keeping very nearly the same amount of wordage.

### Welcome Arrival

WE ARE very glad to announce that Alexander Shaw has joined the Editorial Board. Shaw has just returned from a year's work in India, organising the production of documentary films for the Government and also planning and setting-up an all-Indian organisation to carry out the work. As will be seen from the list of films published elsewhere in this issue, Shaw did not let the grass grow under his feet. We shall publish in the next issue Shaw's account of the film situation in India.

### Stupidity

A STORY is current that several films produced by the Canadian Government cannot get a theatrical release here owing to some obscure clause in the quota regulations. The films concerned include *The Strategy of Metals* and *The Battle for Oil*, which those who have seen them claim to be two of the best propaganda-plus-informational films of the war. Both were officially produced by John Grierson and Stuart Legg for the Canadian Government. It is said that a well-known American renting firm cannot obtain renter's quota for them in the United Kingdom, and this presumably means that they are classed as "alien" films—a pretty compliment to the Commonwealth. We hope that action will be taken to see that any pettifogging restrictions in the way are quickly removed. This is no time for crass parochial stupidity to prevent the showing of films which relate our own individual war efforts to the world scale of the conflict. The B.O.T. must snip a few strands of red tape right away.

### Flaherty

WE HOPE that Robert Flaherty's film *The Land*, to which reference is made elsewhere in this issue, will be sent over here as soon as possible. All British film people owe Flaherty a great deal for his rumbustious sojourn over here, and few will see without a sigh of regret his Chelsea flat, battered slightly, and exposed at unexpected angles, perched on the edge of one of the Embankment's largest lumps of devastation. Any new film by him is an event, and this one, which deals with one of the U.S.A.'s most pressing internal problems, is bound to be of special interest. We hope, by the way, that in wartime America he will continue to wield his camera in his inimitable way.

### It's an Ill Wind . . .

THE PROPAGANDA content of the financial columns of the Press is always worthy of study. A recent attempt to build up national morale was made by the City Editor of the *Sunday Express*. In reference to Japan's increasing grip on vital war materials he writes as follows:

"But the outlook for rubber investors is not wholly gloomy. Before the Japs came in, it was estimated that the United States would finish the war with "strategic" reserves of 500,000 tons while we might have accumulated stocks of 250,000 tons. Gradual liquidation of those stocks would have kept the price of rubber low for years. Now it seems that Europe and America may finish up with almost no rubber at all."

### "Target for Tonight"

THE NATIONAL Board of Review of Motion Pictures, which annually selects the outstanding work of the year in every branch of production has chosen *Target for Tonight* as 1941's best documentary. The Ministry of Information announces that by the time this film finishes its release in the United States, Canada and South America, it is anticipated that it will have played in over 12,000 theatres to approximately 50 million people.

### Dirt in the Milky Way

SAID Mr. R. H. Naylor, noted astrologer, in a recent issue of *The Sunday Express*:

"Propaganda—In the middle of this year Uranus ("The Awakener") enters Gemini (the Zodiacal sign concerned with publicity and communications). That spells the death of propaganda as we have known it and the birth of a new form of propaganda."

By natural law the present forms of propaganda must finally defeat themselves. The day will soon come when the leaflet will fail, the loudspeaker blare in vain, the propagandists shout unheeded.

When that moment comes—and it will come while Uranus is in Gemini, i.e. 1942-1949—propaganda may roar, but the public mind will heed not.

Various consequences will follow:

(1) The whole propaganda machinery of dictatorship—under whatever name that dictatorship masquerades—will unaccountably become non-effectual.

(2) Hence a desperate attempt everywhere to muzzle free speech and constructive criticism; in the hope of giving new life to old methods of shaping mass opinion.

(3) Political and business psychologists will have to invent new and more subtle forms of propaganda and advertising."

We hope the M.O.I. and the documentary movement will jointly note this prophecy, and make arrangements for an appropriate Witches' Sabbath to be held in Russell Square. D.N.L., for its part, is prepared to exert itself no less fully in casting runes than it does in casting aspersions.

### Allied Propaganda Needs

WE DEAL IN this issue with the need for national co-ordination of film propaganda. This is an issue of vital importance matched only by a new need arising from the clarification of the international situation caused by the Japanese aggression. The Allied Front is now world-wide, and it is clear that not only must each nation look carefully to the efficiency of its propaganda machinery but also that the Allied Powers must immediately co-ordinate their individual propaganda efforts. It is all to the good to learn that an information department has been set up in Chungking, but it is to be hoped that this department will not find itself working in a vacuum. It is a case for joint action by Britain, the Dominions, the United States, the U.S.S.R., China, and those governments of allies temporarily overrun by the Nazis.

## GETTING THEM SHOWN

**A survey of the huge distribution of propaganda and instructional films which is now growing up in Great Britain as part of the national war effort.**

TO produce good films for purposes of information and propaganda is only half the job. In addition to ensuring the right subject-matter and efficient and speedy production it is vitally important to see that the distribution machinery is working properly. Propagandists should always be able to answer the questions: (a) Are your films reaching the largest number of people in general? and (b) are they, when made for special purposes, reaching the right groups of people?

The answers to these questions are not always as easy as might be thought, particularly as regards the circulation of films overseas. The British Council Films Committee has never been able to satisfy questioners as to the extent and quality of its overseas

distribution. We doubt, for that matter, how far the M.O.I. can be absolutely sure of its overseas coverage, although it must obviously have a number of facts and figures at its disposal. The difficulty here, of course, is that it is easy enough to send a number of prints, lavenders and negatives to various parts of the world, and it is also comparatively simple to get estimates of the numbers of shows given. But the numbers and type of the audiences are much more difficult to come by. A list of showings in, say, Turkey or Egypt, may look imposing, although in fact the film may only have been shown to limited audiences at Embassy soirées or such like.

The only solution to this problem is the

appointment of officers overseas with some knowledge and training in the field of films. This has in some cases been done—notably in New York—but there still appears to be too much reliance on “the usual diplomatic channels” which provide all too little understanding of the problems involved.

Nevertheless everyone will agree that in this country the M.O.I.'s distribution system has been sensibly planned and carried out. The five minute films reach a known audience of ordinary film goers, even if there are some doubts as to how many exhibitors are keeping fully to the letter of the C.E.A. agreement. And the non-theatrical scheme, created and run by acknowledged experts and pioneers in this field of distribution, is working admirably. The only difficulty here is, apparently, to achieve a supply of sub-standard prints sufficiently big to meet the constantly increasing demand, although the Treasury appears to have been far from miserly in its grants for distribution.

The M.O.I., however, is only a part of the distribution picture. The bulk of the nation's youth is in uniform, and films are being increasingly used for training purposes as well as for general education and for entertainment. This type of distribution is largely in control of the Services themselves, and, although it is difficult for civilians to obtain a full picture of the situation, it is widely felt that the distribution situation in the Services is by no means satisfactory.

**We are not at the moment concerned with the question of whether service training films are good or bad (in general they appear to be a pretty mixed bunch). We are concerned with the questions: “Are training films, when made, used properly? And are they seen by the right trainees at the right time and at the correct intervals in the curriculum?”**

While it is, as we have found out, difficult to obtain official answers to these and similar queries, there does appear to be a good deal of doubt as to whether they can at present be satisfactorily answered. It is said (and we are speaking of the Services in general) that the conditions of projection are not always satisfactory. If the screen image is too dark and the sound is distorted the best training film in the world is not worth showing. It would appear, moreover, that many Service men have never seen any training films. There are, too, doubts as to whether commanding officers fully appreciate that films must either be properly used or not at all. It is no use showing a unit a ten-reel film in one long session when it has been specially produced to be shown reel by reel at ten different stages of training.

Have the Services taken the distribution problem seriously enough? Have they realised that distribution is a creative as well as a technical job? Are experts in distribution being employed, and are they in positions of sufficient authority? These and similar questions are being widely asked, and it would seem that a strict investigation into

distribution methods, projection conditions, and their whole relationship to training and educational activities, is now overdue.

Most in the public eye at present is the Army. The War Office has established a complete department to deal with the production and distribution of training films. This department (on whose production activities we have more than once had occasion to comment) is operating on a large scale, and considerable public monies are involved.

A statement has now been issued by the War Office to explain the respective functions of the Director of Army Kinematography (Paul Kimberley) and the Army Film Unit, which is controlled by the Director of Public Relations. This statement makes it clear that Kimberley is responsible for the production of Army films for instructional and training purposes and also for the supply, distribution and maintenance of all projectors and film prints (including those which are for purely recreational purposes) required by the Army. On the other hand the Director of Public Relations remains in charge of the Army Film Unit, whose job it is to supply “film material about the Army” (sic) for public cinema distribution. The statement emphasises that the Army Film Unit “is concerned with propaganda and Army publicity and therefore very closely related to the Films Division of the Ministry of Information.”

From all this it would appear that Kimberley has been whisking his new broom around to some purpose, and that in the process he has much strengthened the hand of his own department, since, in addition to training films made by Trade Units, he has now formed an Army Kinematograph Service Film Unit to undertake training work. The means of staffing this Unit are, we gather, already causing some heartburns in the cinema trade.

In a further statement it is announced that the War Office Kinematograph Department will within two months have 150 35-mm. mobile units supplied with generating sets and two projectors, and also 400 16-mm. mobile vans, half of which are completely self-contained and can give shows anywhere and the other half equipped to plug into main supplies. It is also stated that 200 static units are installed in training centres. Between 60 and 70 per cent of this equipment already exists.

Thus the War Office Cinematograph Department will shortly have at its disposal an enormous number of projectors. The statement continues. “It is intended to use this apparatus primarily for educational purposes, but half the time it will be available for entertainment purposes, and arrangements are being made for the supply of films.”

This evidence of the widespread distribution organisation which is being set up by the War Office will naturally be welcomed in all quarters. It must be confessed

that we are still somewhat in the dark as to the actual organisational system by which the right training films are to be supplied to the right units at the right time. It is to be hoped that the Director of Army Kinematography will find himself well supplied with experts in non-theatrical distribution, and that he will bear closely in mind that in addition to the technical problems there are also creative problems in any use of films for this type of showing.

To-day, great improvements are being made in Army Education, and facilities for spare time study are being greatly extended. Sub-standard film shows could be of great value, particularly in relation to discussion groups and study circles, both of which are being encouraged by the Army Education authorities. Films for this purpose must of course be drawn from the same sources as those used by civilians, but those Army Education officers who attempt to do this are apparently finding it difficult to obtain copies of the films they require owing, no doubt, to the immense civilian demand for non-theatrical film prints. There would appear to be a strong case for the War Office to make a separate grant to the Central Film Library, so that copies of important films shall be readily available to Service Units on an exclusive basis.

It is of course doubtful whether some Education Officers fully realise the number and variety of films which are available from the three Central Film Library catalogues, from the Petroleum Films Bureau, and from the Gas Association—to say nothing of films which can be hired from commercial agencies. In some cases it would appear that Command Education Officers have a number of copies of films at their disposal, but some of these do not always seem to be well chosen nor the catalogues well laid out. (Hence the misunderstanding by which a Russian lecture was illustrated by a film entitled *The Red Army* which turned out to be concerned with the life and habits of the domestic bed-bug).

Nothing could be more striking than the immense expansion of the whole non-theatrical field during the last two years. In addition to the army activities already referred to the Ministry of Information has 100 vans giving non-theatrical shows (to say nothing of its constant supply of films to people who already have their own projectors) and, although figures are apparently not available, both the Navy and the Royal Air Force must also have a considerable number of projectors.

The capital investment represented by these activities is pretty large; but it is also of incalculable value. When the war is over we shall as a nation have in our possession one of the most powerful weapons of public education imaginable. All the more reason therefore for ensuring that distribution should be efficiently and also imaginatively carried out here and now.



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**NEW  
DOCUMENTARY  
FILMS**

**W.V.S. Production:** Verity Films. **Direction:** Louise Birt. **Camera:** George Plowman. **Music:** William Alwyn. 19 minutes.

**Subject:** Mary Welsh, an American newspaper writer, is looking for a story about the W.V.S. She interviews Lady Reading and subsequently pieces together, at her typewriter, a few of the seemingly innumerable jobs that the volunteers in this Service perform.

They organise sorting depots for clothes, mend oilskins for the Merchant Navy, look after blitzed families and take care of children in reception nurseries. Every little job of personal service, whether it is ambulance driving or arranging street salvage dumps, billeting evacuated families or servicing rest centres, making hot tea for the mobile canteens or helping mothers whose children are evacuated, is done willingly and efficiently by this unpaid army of a million women.

**Treatment:** This film is an extremely competent and straightforward job of reporting. It succeeds in covering a very wide field, ranging from streets dumps to nurseries, rest homes and a Scottish fishing village, with a dozen other places in between. It has a very nice feeling for personal detail and for ordinary people doing an ordinary job of work. Photography is excellent and Alwyn's music helps a lot. Mary Welsh who commentates all through has a pleasant voice and speaks a thoughtfully written commentary well.

**Propaganda value:** Very good. Made specifically for American release it does its job. If it secures exhibition in this country—and it should do—some commentary changes would be advisable. At times it is a little too patronising to America for British consumption. The film is a worthy record and a worthy tribute to a great body of people who get little or no publicity but are doing a job as good as any.

**All Those in Favour.** Paul Rotha Productions. **Direction:** Donald Alexander. **Camera:** Geoffrey Faithfull. 2-reel Non-T. 22 min.

**Subject:** The impact of the war on local government in a rural district of Devonshire, and the steps taken by a special committee of the local council to solve the various problems arising from emergency conditions.

**Treatment.** The most striking thing about Alexander's direction of this film is his use of synchronous dialogue, spoken in open-air locations and often while the characters are walking along roads or across fields; this dialogue is used to point the moral rather than adorn the tale, and it is often very effective because the conversation is intimately related either to background action or—dramatically—to an entire landscape. The story is shaped from a personal investigation made by an American news correspondent who visits Devonshire and discusses matters with members of the local council; but in addition to this, various sections of the film are compéred by the council people concerned, and here Alexander has ingeniously mingled actors with real people. This is especially successful in the meeting of the council. The

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(Continued)

only criticism of the film is that despite its technical skill and ingenuity some of it is on the dry side—but it must be remembered that in tackling the subject of local government this was almost unavoidable; and the wonder is that so much of the film is free from this defect.

**Propaganda value.** At a time when democracy, facing its greatest crisis, is gradually learning that its future lies in the closest possible fusion between central (national) planning and active regionalism, this film will be of immense propaganda value. *All Those in Favour* emphasises the necessity for local initiative and for the creative action of individuals within the local scheme, without which national planning becomes either a cipher or a form of dictatorship. It therefore has a direct appeal to all citizens who are determined that the post-war period shall be one not only of reconstruction but of absolute democratic progress. Thus within the limits of its treatment this film rates full marks for propaganda.

**War in the East.** Production: Shell Film Unit. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** The situation in the Far East after Japan's aggression. Strategic points, sea distances, and possible moves and counter-moves by the various forces are described.

**Treatment.** Practically the entire film is composed of simple maps and diagrams, often with a lecturer pointing at relevant parts of the map or illustrating comparative distances with a ruler. The argument is succinctly and vividly expressed and remains fully up-to-date despite the fall of Hongkong. It is especially noteworthy that the whole film was made in eight days, from treatment to show-copy, and congratulations are due to the Shell Film Unit for its admirable teamwork, and to the M.O.I. Films Division for its foresight and speed. After seeing this film one is inclined once again to raise the plea for more of this sort—many of which could be made in rough form by intelligent anticipation and be ready for use in emergency.

**Propaganda value.** This is just the type of informational film which the public surely wants. Full marks.

**Main Street, U.S.A.** Production: March of Time (No. 8, Seventh year.) Distribution: R.K.O. Radio Pictures.

**Subject.** Made just prior to America's entry into the war, an analysis is made of her civil defence efforts, together with an attempted enactment of what life would be like for Americans if Hitler were able to impose his "New Order" there.

**Treatment.** This is one of the most disappointing issues of "March of Time" for some while, utterly lacking in conviction, and to English audiences at least, likely to provoke considerable mirth. We are introduced to what is described as a "typical" American family. They are a pretty revolting lot and it is significant that in one of the two sync. dialogue sequences, the father and his eldest son—a corporal in the Army—can find no other subject of conversation than to attack trade unionism and denounce strikes—as if everything else in the American social system was perfect.

The re-enacted sequence of what life would be like under Hitler is done rather in the style of an "Our Gang" comedy. Groups of self-conscious youths march round the streets trying to look tough and pretend to beat up harmless citizens.

Their efforts culminate in raiding the headquarters of the "Loyal Order of the Moose." The suppression of this doubtless formidable body may exemplify fascism in all its bestiality to an American, but over here it's just a big joke.

The shooting all through is stagey and unrealistic, particularly so when dealing with people, all of whom look extremely nervous and very conscious of the camera.

**Propaganda value.** The film does very little to create a better understanding between the peoples of America and Britain and its "ideology" is very doubtful. At times one gets the impression—due to the unfortunate selection of types and what they are made to say—that while America on no account wants Hitler's new order, it would not be averse to a form of American fascism, if only to deal with these damned labour agitators. And once that idea gets around it's going to start an awful lot of trouble.

**They Met in London.** Paul Rotha Productions and British Paramount News. Producer: Paul Rotha. Photography: Jack Harding. Non-T. 11 minutes.

**Subject.** The 1941 meeting of the British Association. It is opened by Mr. Maisky, Dr. Wellington Koo, Dr. Benes, Mr. Winant and Anthony Eden. Then the association gets down to discussion of war and reconstruction. Young scientists say how much more could be done by pooling knowledge and equipment. Sir John Orr and H. G. Wells speak and Julian Huxley puts their difficulties in a nutshell. "It is no good planning for the post-war period if we don't win the war. That's obvious. At the same time, what's the good of winning the war if we don't plan the post-war period."

**Treatment.** The film is produced jointly by Paul Rotha Productions and Paramount News, and it is pleasant to see some co-operation round the place, for however much the Newsreel Association shout their intentions of being 100 per cent behind the war effort, some members still won't co-operate to make films even if they are needed for the war effort. The film is a good example of a little goodwill and a little less profit-making. It is extremely well photographed and recorded. The story is straight and clean.

**Propaganda Value.** Very good for overseas. Celebrity appeal. Maisky, Wells, Sir John Orr, Huxley. Critical and progressive sentiments, effective.

**How to Thatch.** Production: Strand. Direction: Ralph Bond. Photography: Charles Marlborough. Commentary: Freddie Grisewood. Associate Producer: Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. non-theatrical for the Ministry of Agriculture. 11 minutes.

**Subject.** *How to Thatch* is another of the Ministry of Agriculture's first-class instructional films. In a pleasant simple fashion it shows how an expert goes about thatching a rick, round or rectangular. We are introduced to the expert, who looks a fine old boy, his young assistant, and a number of new phrases and expressions, the wisest of which is "yealms" for the sections of thatching straw stripped out ready for laying.

**Treatment.** The film is very well made in a quite straight instructional vein, with plenty of close shots, good camerawork, and a decent human touch in dealing with the thatcher and his assistant. Minor cavils are that the commentary is too stilted and unhuman in wording, so that it is a bit out of step with the human quality of the shooting; that it contains (obviously the M. of

A.'s fault this) a fair amount of facts, figures and pronouncements that have very little to do with the film as it has been shot, and merely over-balance it, and that the commentator's voice is too obviously smart and townie for a film of this kind. But these are fairly minor points.

**Instructional value.** It is difficult to say what the instructional value of this and similar farming films will prove to be. Obviously they are extremely pleasant for laymen and near-laymen to watch, and their general message is good, clear and useful, and that is justification enough. But whether this film, for instance, will persuade farmers to do their thatching better or tell them something they don't know already, I don't really know and should hate to guess.

**Naval Operations.** Production: Shell Film Unit. Producer: Edgar Anstey. Direction: Grahame Tharp. Diagrams: Francis Rodker. M.O.I. 5 mins.

**Subject.** *Naval Operations* briefly describes some of the different units that make up the Navy—battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and so on—and illustrates the strategy and tactics of their use with reference to the sinking of the Bismarck, and to the Matapan, Graf Spee and other actions.

**Treatment.** Technically, the film consists for the most part of animated diagrams illustrated from time to time with library shots. The diagrams are very well made, easy to follow and have plenty of pleasantly swift tracks and pans to liven them up. The film, however, attempts to cover too much ground, with the result that it presents a somewhat scrappy appearance, with the function of some areas barely mentioned and the functions of some craft (submarines for instance) not mentioned at all. It might have been wiser to concentrate simply on one action; but within its limits the film is well made.

**Propaganda Value.** The film is sure to prove interesting to the general public, and no doubt the spreading of information of any kind can be considered an end in itself. Anyway it would be unfair to criticise a film which sets out to do no more than touch on certain aspects of naval tactics, for not dealing with the fascinating subject of sea-power.

**Three in a Shell Hole.** Production: Mosfilm News. Direction: Leonid Leonov. English Version and Dubbing: Soviet War News Film Agency. M.O.I. 5 minutes.

**Subject.** This is the first Russian film to be shown as one of the M.O.I. 5 minutes. It tells of the work of one of the Soviet Red Cross girls in the front line. During a Russian counter-attack she is driven to take refuge in a shell-hole where she finds a Russian soldier wounded in the knee. She patches him up and then, with a German machine-gun stopping her leaving, discovers a German doctor buried in the same shell-hole. She looks after him too and fetches water for both of them. As she prepares to go, the German doctor digs up his buried revolver and is about to shoot her when the Russian soldier shoots him instead, and the two Russians both rejoin the counter attack.

**Treatment.** The film is nicely made in a plain realistic style. The production, sound and photography are all well done, and the girl herself is extremely good. She looks serious and sincere and goes about her business with a very pleasant and reassuring deftness and intensity. You feel that the whole thing means a great deal to her, that the war is really about something.

(Continued on page 6)

## NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

(Continued)

The Russian voices are dubbed into English; this is supposed to be essential for British audiences (though I doubt it), but here at any rate it is so badly done as to ruin the whole realism of the film. The voices are affected, the wording pompous and the lip-synching inaccurate. If it is really believed that audiences will not stand subtitles, it would be worth while to try leaving the original dialogue on the film with an English voice giving the gist of it from time to time. Anyway it is quite certain that this sort of dubbing on a realistic film is a failure.

*Propaganda value.* The film is very obviously addressed to Russian audiences, with its fierce fighting spirit and insistence on the sub-human brutality of the Germans. The main message that home audiences will draw is a very useful confidence in the seriousness, tenacity and decency of the Russians, with a small by-product on the ethics of the medical profession. But it is for the M.O.I. to try and tie up the vivid front line danger of the Russian women soldiers with the activities of the A.T.S. By the way, it does not seem particularly useful to suggest in cheerful Charlie fashion, as is done in the opening shots of this film, that the Germans, if left to themselves, will happily exterminate each other. However, the more Russian stuff that gets on our screens, the better for everybody.

*Sowing and Planting.* Production: Selwyn Films Limited. Direction: Jack Elliott. Photography: Jack Parker. Commentary: Roy Hay. Distribution: M.O.I. for the Ministry of Agriculture. 10 minutes.

*Subject.* *Sowing and Planting* is the second of the instructional gardening films for beginners and new allotment holders, the first being *How to Dig*. It covers the preparation of the ground, plantings shallots, sowing onions and parsnips, sowing the seed-bed and planting potatoes.

*Treatment.* As in the first film it is extremely pleasant to see people at work who obviously know how to do their job, and the shooting and cutting emphasise wisely the rhythm and sureness of their actions. In a film of this length (10 minutes) it must be a problem to decide how much to cover, particularly as it is hopeless to try and squeeze too much information into a small space, but the film manages to give a good general idea of how to plant and sow. However, gardening is a religion where there are no orthodoxies and hundreds of heresies. As this series develops I can visualise more and more controversy arising among the various sects. I hope for instance that beginners with heavy clay soil after seeing the film will not go straight out on a wet day and start treading their allotments, excellent though treading is for the light loam shown here. And for the same reason I don't much care for the business of shuffling in the newly sown rows with the feet. But a film like this must remain simple.

*Instructional Value.* Within its limits, full marks. It is extremely well made, clearly shot, neatly edited and simply commentated.

No. 2

## THE GOLDEN GOOSE



THERE was a man who had three sons. The youngest was called Dumpling, and was on all occasions despised and ill-treated by the whole family. It happened that the eldest went one day into the wood to cut fuel; and his mother gave him a delicious pasty and a bottle of wine to take with him. As he went into the wood, a little old man bid him good-day, and said, "Give me a little piece of meat from your pasty, and a little wine out of your bottle; I'm very hungry and thirsty." But this clever young man said, "Give you my meat and wine! No, I thank you; I should not have enough left for myself"; and away he went. He soon began to cut down a tree; but he had not worked long before he missed his stroke and cut himself.

Next went out the second son to work; and his mother gave him, too, a pasty and a bottle of wine. And the same little old man met him also, and asked him for something to eat and drink. But he too thought himself vastly clever, and said, "Whatever you get, I shall lose; so go your way!" The second stroke that he aimed against a tree, hit him on the leg; so that he too was forced to go home.

Then Dumpling said, "Father, I should like to go and cut wood, too."

But his father answered, "You had better stay at home, for you know nothing of the business." But Dumpling was very pressing, and at last his father said, "Go your way; you'll be wiser when you have suffered for your folly." And his mother gave him only some dry bread and a bottle of sour beer. But when he went into the wood, he too met the little old man. Dumpling said, "I've only dry bread and sour beer; if that will suit you, we will sit down and eat it together." So they sat down, and when the lad pulled out his bread it was turned into a fine pasty and his sour beer was delightful wine. They ate and drank heartily; and when they had done, the little man said, "As you have a kind heart, I will send a blessing upon you. There stands an old tree: cut it down and you will find something at the root."

Dumpling set to work, and cut down the tree; and when it fell, he found in the hollow under the roots a goose with feathers of pure gold. He took it up, and went on to an inn where he proposed to sleep for the night. The landlord and his three daughters when they saw the goose, were very curious to examine what this wonderful bird could be. At last the eldest said, "I must and will have a feather."

So she waited until his back was turned, and then seized the goose by the wing; to her great surprise there she stuck, for neither hand nor finger could she get away again. Presently in came the second sister and thought to have a feather too; but the moment she touched her sister, there she too hung fast. At last came the third, and wanted a feather; but the other two cried out, "Keep away! for heaven's sake keep away!" However, she did not understand what they meant. "If they are there," thought she, "I may as well be there too." So she went up to them; but the moment she touched her sisters she stuck fast. And so they kept company with the goose all night.

The next morning Dumpling carried off the goose under his arm, and took no notice of the three girls, but went out with them sticking fast behind.

In the middle of a field the parson met them; and when he saw the train, he said, "Are you not ashamed of yourselves you bold girls, to run after the young man in that way over the fields? Is that proper behaviour?" Then he took the youngest by the hand to lead her away, but the moment he touched her he too hung fast, and followed in the train. Presently, up came the clerk; and when he saw his master the parson running after the three girls, he wondered greatly, and said, "Hollo! hollo! your reverence! whither so fast? there is a christening today." Then he ran up, and took him by the gown, and in a moment he was fast too. As the five were thus trudging along, one behind another, they met two labourers with their mattocks, coming from work; and the parson cried out to them to set him free. But scarcely had they touched him, when they too fell into the ranks, and so made seven, all running after Dumpling and his goose.

At last they arrived at a city, where reigned a king who had an only daughter. The princess was of so serious a turn of mind that no one could make her laugh; and the king had proclaimed to all the world, that whoever could make her laugh should have her for his wife. As soon as she saw the seven all hanging together, running about treading on each other's heels, she could not help bursting into a long and loud laugh. Then Dumpling claimed her for his wife; and he was heir to the kingdom and lived happily ever after.

REALIST FILM UNIT

47 OXFORD STREET, W. 1

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## FILM OF THE MONTH

**Shors.** Produced at the Ukrainfilm Studios, Kiev. Direction: Alexander Dovzhenko. Photography: Y. Ekelchik. Music: A. Kabalevsky.

*Shors* is a particularly welcome film at this time. Not only does it provide a badly needed key to getting free drinks (wangle your friends into asking "What's *Shors*?") but it's just about the finest sort of film anyone could wish for in wartime. It's a film about war and fighting, but, much more than that, a film about what people fight for. For the richness and fertility of their native land, for love, for warmth of blood and warmth of feeling, for the pleasure of living and the dignity of dying. Dovzhenko is one of the few men who, like Beethoven, all the time talks naturally and unaffectedly about everything in capital letters—Love, Death, Strife, Fertility.

The story of *Shors* is set in the Ukraine in 1918-19 when the local Bolsheviks had to drive out first the invading Germans and then Petlura with his White Guard and armies of intervention, but after the first three shots it's perfectly clear that the film is going to be much more than a slice of re-enacted history. It opens with a typical Dovzhenko landscape, a sloping field of sunflowers shimmering in the sun, with two blooms right in front of the camera. Suddenly there is a shell burst among the sunflowers, then another, and all at once, under your very eyes, the opposing armies push up through the sunflowers and get to grips in a hand to hand struggle among the riches of the earth they're fighting for, with the Ukrainians using their bare hands to ram down the throats of the invaders the same corn and sunflowers they came to steal. There has never been anything before quite like these first shots and the whole opening sequence, with its warmth and violence, for setting the mood of a film. The nearest to it was the opening reel of *La Bête Humaine*.

This is the first film of Dovzhenko's we've been allowed to see publicly over here since *Earth*. There seems to have been a bit of hanky-panky about him one way and another, as *Ivan*, his film of the building of Dnepropetrovsk, never got beyond the bonded film stores, and *Aerograd*, his later anti-Japanese one about fighting on the Manchurian border, which was very good according to American reviews, never got here at all. Anyway, it would be a good idea for the Soviet War News Film Agency to fetch it over now and let us have a look at how the Russians deal with the Japs.

Dovzhenko is certainly an amazing director. He has the most individual touch of any: if you put him on to shooting the life of the ant I guarantee you'd recognise his style after the first few shots. This individual quality, a lyrical, poetical feeling of warm blood, fertility, love for the soil and joy of living, combined with a great atmosphere of folk-lore in the telling of the story, is, I'm willing to bet, quite unconscious and unsought for by Dovzhenko himself. I should say that realism (which he certainly gets) is what he goes for in his shooting, and the rest is just a by-product. It is rather pathetic and amusing to see poor old Eisenstein, after months spent on careful historical research and delving into the records and religious ritual of the time, so as to get the true folk-tale spirit

into a seven hundred years' old story, come out with that dreary schoolbook exercise *Alexander Nevsky*, whilst Dovzhenko in a couple of minutes on the screen can turn a realistic tale of modern battle into true and authentic folk-lore.

He's certainly helped by his cameraman, Ekelchik; the photography throughout the film has a marvellous shimmering, luminous quality, particularly in the exteriors, that it is a bit difficult to account for. It's something like the old orthochromatic or modern infra-red effect, with the foreground bright and glazed in the sunshine and the background lowering off into darkness—it must be something to do with the light in the Ukraine. And, of course, it works specially well on Dovzhenko's particular favourites, horses. This film, like *Earth*, is full of horses; three riderless horses galloping through the wheat, horses sheering off as the shells burst, and coming with their flanks gleaming right across the camera, close-ups of men and horses, a horse standing appreciatively by as his master and friend have a drink together, horses in the charge, with the camera panning with their, not the riders', heads. And the sound too is fine, a very good score from Kabalevsky and full volume on the sound effects, so that you think you've never really heard a shell burst before.

The story of *Shors*, inside the story of the liberation of the Ukraine, tells, somewhat on *Chapayev* lines, of the friendship between Shors, the efficient young party-member and commander, and Bozhenko, a tough rowdy bearded old lad magnificently played by I. Skuratov. The film in a pleasant loosely-constructed continuity alternates between large-scale spectacular action sequences and intimate dialogue scenes. The action sequences are beautifully done on a scale of production that makes Cecil B. de Mille look like a quickie merchant—the opening sequence with its shot of one horseman cutting another down; the battle of Chernigov, with the thousands of tiny figures advancing over a snow-covered landscape that reminds you of Breughel, and the astonishing tracking shots with the cavalry; the fraternising with the German troops; the retreat through the cornfields with dying Bozhenko carried on the shoulders of his men and the horizon black with the smoke of burning villages; the entry of the Bolsheviks into Kiev and, shot with perfect economy, what it meant to the inhabitants—the release of the prisoners from gaol, the pained reaction of the bourgeois as they look down from an upper window and complain of the Bolsheviks, like W. C. Fields's wife of the burglars, that they're singing; the reunion of the soldiers with their families, and the two children rubbing a place in their cellar window to look up at the troops riding by whilst their mother lies dying on a pallet behind. And the intimate dialogue scenes are, in their way, just as good—the village wedding feast with the cheerful interruption of the troops and the handsome young gunner making a speech about love, bearing off the bride for himself and giving an old peasant woman the long awaited opportunity for a quite irrelevant denunciation of her old man; Bozhenko, particularly old Bozhenko, with his studied address to the bourgeois citizens of Kiev, his quick, flattening dismissal of an officer

prisoner, his corrective beating of his henchman Savochko and their drinks and reminiscences together afterwards, his map-reading course with Savochko, and his broken-hearted grief when he hears of the killing of his wife. All this is done with such a broad sweep, with such a sense of warm blood and warm feelings, with such a natural peasant touch about it, that the film leaves you with a firm conviction that life is a pleasant thing, the Ukraine a fine country, and the Russians bloody good lively lads.

There are just two things wrong. The continuity is loose anyway, though that is quite pleasant; but on the top of that whole actions and sequences have obviously been cut out and the film as it is shown now presents a horribly mutilated appearance, particularly towards the end. I don't see why we shouldn't be allowed to see films as they're meant to be seen, it looks as though half an hour has been cut out of *Shors*. Then there's Shors himself: I'm afraid he's not a particularly pleasant character; efficient and forceful enough, but in his scenes with Bozhenko revealing himself as a nasty young prig. In fact the "policy" scenes in general all have a slightly unpleasant flavour, quite out of character with the generous human quality of the rest of the film. No doubt both the savage cuts and mutilations, and the intrusive sermons on behaviour and policy spring from the same cause: never mind, *Shors* is absolutely first class and nobody should miss it.

## INDUSTRIAL TRAINING FILMS IN U.S.A.

EXCLUSIVE distribution rights to the Government's biggest civilian training film project, some sixty films produced by several commercial producers for the U.S. Office of Education, have been awarded to Castle Films (30 Rockefeller Plaza, N.Y.C.). The films are intended as visual aids in training machine shop workers and shipbuilding craftsmen. Ten films on shipbuilding are included in the programme. The distributing company announced that five pictures on the machine shop would be released by November (last) and twenty subjects, in groups of five, by December (last). Prints are not rented, but sold to interested organisations, among which are educational and vocational training centres.

The first two films in another training film programme, similar to the Office of Education's, have been announced by Burton Holmes Films. Sponsor is the South Bend Lathe Company. The series (16 mm., sound, colour) is based on the book, "How to Run a Lathe," and the films are to be used in conjunction with the book. Object is to speed the training of lathe operators in defence industries. Titles of the completed films are *The Metal Working Lathe* and *Plain Turning*. Rental is free, borrower paying transportation.

A new and unusual series of films on arc welding is being produced by Raphael G. Wolff, Inc. These films are in 16 mm., sound, colour; designed for teaching. The arc flame is shown and explained in a simple manner through live action photography combined with animation. Direction is by Paul Satterfield, who directed the Walt Disney riveting picture.

# DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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## DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

stands for the use of film as a medium of propaganda and instruction in the interests of the people of Great Britain and the Empire and in the interests of common people all over the world.

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# ARMY TRAINING FILMS IN U.S.A.

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WITH an absence of publicity and an air of routine that is typical of the military attitude, the Army's expanded training film programme has covered a great deal of ground during the year now ended. Audiences of more than a million have seen the basic training subjects; relatively small groups have seen the pictures produced on hundreds of vital technical matters affecting the welfare of the modern army. All have received effective instruction in a wide range of subjects. No estimate has been made of the distribution in terms of thousands and millions of men, but there can be no doubt that the Army has created and manned the largest educational film programme yet attempted.

The total strength of the Training Film Production Laboratory, located at the Signal Corps post at Fort Monmouth, N.J., has probably reached its final quota in terms of men, with almost 200 enlisted soldiers, about 30 officers and a dozen civilian specialists working on production. All these men have had previous experience in some type of motion picture work, with the majority recruited from the Hollywood entertainment factories. The T.F.P.L. occupies one rather crowded building, with the foundations for a second already laid a short distance away, and completion promised by January.

More important than the record of completed subjects and the technical facilities that have been collected is the fact that a tremendous amount of inertia, arising in many different phases of the situation, has been overcome during the past year. This is probably the most important of the achievements. Because training film production is necessarily subordinated to the work of all the branches and services of the Army, and is subject to countless controls contained in the channels of military authority, the expansion of a complex unit from a strength of seven men to almost 250, since authorisation of the present programme in August, 1940, presented in this respect alone, a formidable problem in setting up effective military procedures. On the educational side of the picture, there is the fact that motion picture methods used for teaching purposes are still relatively undeveloped, and so the Army, which has had a rudimentary training film unit since 1932, has had to find its own methods, more or less independently of outside authorities and practices.

But officers and men accustomed to the technical elaborations of Hollywood studios at first felt hampered by the rigidity of Army requirements and by the apparent routineness of its educational methods. Actual experience, often under conditions of high pressure activity, produced encouraging results. Many training films on commonplace subjects have obviously been of the cut-and-dried variety, but most of the more recent films show encouraging fluidity in the use of the camera and inventiveness in methods of condensation and emphasis. Garson Kanin, top ranking R.K.O. director, a draftee for about four months until released because over 28 (and now

a \$1 a year consultant on films for the O.P.M. Information office in Washington), shot two films on the general subject of gas defence, and turned in reels that are interesting enough for theatrical presentation and at the same time undoubtedly successful in carrying a clearly presented load of specific technical information to a mass audience. Standards will normally tend to be raised through the influence of high class creative work on other similar work being carried on in the same place.

"Men and Machines" might be an appropriate title for the Army film programme as a whole, with emphasis, at least for the present, on the latter item. One of the most pressing of all the training problems is to develop familiarity with the operation of the multitude of complex mechanical instruments and weapons developed by modern warfare. Consequently for each branch of the service, films on various types of machines are in production, having as their subject-matter the operation of small arms, artillery, tanks, searchlights, signal devices, construction tools and vehicles of transportation. Later on, emphasis will naturally shift towards the topics related to the behaviour of troops in the field and the more complex strategic problems.

But even at present the expanding scope of the Army's work requires a new type of film production to be taken up. Men must be given basic training in electricity in a minimum of time in order to pass them through the Signal Corps' courses in radio and wire communication, and for this purpose a series of films entitled *Elements of Electricity* has been approved. The series will be made at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, with the co-operation of the physics department there. Work is starting immediately on the first subject, entitled *Atomic Structure and Ohm's Law*, and elaborate production devices will be employed to make the films both graphic and interesting. Thus, starting with a vitally serious military objective, the Army finds itself pioneering in fields closely related to the high school and university class-room, and it is more than likely that new techniques and talent beneficial to the progress of visual education will be the result.

According to reports from Washington, the Army is scheduled to turn out 370 reels of film during the year ending July 1, 1942. About 120 of these had been completed up to last month. From 50 to 75 35mm. prints and from 200 to 300 16mm. prints, depending upon the subject, are prepared. The films are not made for the general public, and so most of the titles are not announced. Of the total 370 reels 125 are being produced commercially on the Coast by Lieut.-Colonel Darryl F. Zanuck, with Major Stodter as liaison officer.

All films are distributed by 13 central libraries in corps areas. Each of these libraries has from three to five prints of each film. These prints are distributed directly and with the help of about 125 sub-libraries. They are free to all Army camps and local R.O.T.C. organisations.

# INDIAN FILMS

The following is a report on the work done by the "Indian Film Unit", the Production Department of the Film Advisory Board, during the period 18th of January to 28th of October, 1941

## 1. Films Made by the Unit

### (a) India's War Effort

**The Handyman.** A film of the work done by the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners, Kirkee. Its object was to show that the work of this section of the Army is important and highly skilled. "Without the Sappers and Miners no advance is possible... no victory can be gained."

**Seamen of India.** This film is in Hindustani. A sailor visits a village and while there tells his friends about the Royal Indian Navy. "Our job," he says, "is to protect the great ports and the coastline of India, to protect convoys on the first part of their journeys and to sweep the enemy from our seas." The film shows an Indian sailor's life at sea and the sort of jobs he does.

**Convoy from India.** This is a shortened, re-made version of *Seamen of India* in English. The sailor once again visits the village, but this time he tells of the work done by the R.I.N. in escorting and protecting a large convoy. The commentary is written as though it were actually spoken by the sailor and uses village symbols to explain to his friends, who have never seen the sea, what ships, convoys and waves are like.

**Tools for the Job.** This film surveys India's war production. It concentrates on some of the lesser known war materials as the heavier industries are covered by other films in the programme. It opens with a sequence showing the "obscuration of light" in a big Indian city, goes on to explain India's strategic position in the war and then shows war industries such as trucks, tyres, khaki drill, tents, medical supplies, etc. Armaments, ships, war funds and the fighting forces are mentioned.

**Cavalry of the Clouds.** A short recruiting film for the Indian Air Force, for pilots and mechanics.

**Defenders of India.** A tribute to the Indian soldiers who played such a splendid part in the African victories. It was made from material supplied from the Middle East. General Sir Claud Auchinleck speaks the foreword.

**Wartime Factory.** The story of how a large motor factory in India speeded up its production of army trucks to meet the demands of war. The film, while it concentrates on the individual men working on the assembly line, also relates their work to the Indian war effort in general. It also has a brief factory A.R.P. sequence.

**Armoured Cars.** Made out of Indian steel, built by Indian workmen, armoured cars are being produced in India. The film shows the making of the steel, the marking out and cutting, and the assembling and building of the cars. It ends with a sequence showing armoured cars carrying out mass manœuvres on service in the war zone.

**Railway Workshops.** This film has two objects. One to show that India has great engineering workshops and skilled technicians working in them. The other to show that Indian factories can still keep up their essential services and yet make room for direct war production. Here we see the repairing and re-making of railway engines as well as the production of shell cases, fuses, gun rings and precision gauges.

### (b) Might of the Commonwealth

The films under this general title are made out of newsreel material from Movietone and Cairo War Pictorial News. They are intended for rural audiences. There is a written commentary with each film in English and Hindustani.

**Our Navy.** A survey of Britain's sea power. We show the battle with the Graf Spee, the Mediterranean Fleet and the Fleet Air Arm in action from an aircraft carrier. We see destroyers, battleships and convoy work in the Atlantic.

**Our Air Force.** This film shows the training of pilots; a Bomber Command; a Fighter Command; anti-aircraft defences, and ends with an air battle over Britain.

**New Weapons.** Here we see mobile Bren gun units, tanks, big guns and mobile anti-aircraft guns. The final sequence shows the training of parachutists and ends with a mass jump.

**Comrades-in-Arms.** This film shows the people who are fighting together with Britain against the enemy. Indians, Australians, Canadians, South Africans, Poles, Czechs, Norwegians and Free French. At the end America too is helping us by supplying us with the weapons of war.

**Thrills!** This is a film made up of stunt sequences and is intended for entertainment purposes.

### (c) Documentaries on Modern India

**Made in India.** This is a film showing the industrialisation of India. It takes as its theme the suggestion that part of the solution of the great economic difficulties of India lies in rapid industrialisation. But it points out that at the same time the village industries have an important part to play in the life of the country. The village industries shown are spinning, weaving, paper-making and tanning. The large scale industries in the film are: Bata Shoe Factory, Titagur Paper Mills, Associated Cement and Tata Iron and Steel. Also shown are aeroplane and ship-building and the new chemical works in Kathiawar. The film is based on chapters of Minoo Masani's book "Our India."

**The Women of India.** The Indian woman of today is no longer a person of veils and shadows. She is playing her part in the modern world, and this film shows some of her activities. It starts with a country wedding, shows women in offices and shops, women in the professions and women in the entertainment world. We then see women organising and a session of the All-India Women's Conference, and some of the important work which is being done by the progressive women among the poorer sections of the community.

**Modern India.** This film contrasts the India of the country and of the villages with the India of the cities and of the sciences. We see a typical Indian village, the village school, the village doctor and some of the village entertainments such as the performing bear and a troop of marionettes. The film moves to modern India and we see the ballroom of a big hotel in Bombay. The film then surveys progress in India today in the fields of Agriculture, Medicine, Scientific Agriculture and new industries. The film ends in a modern school.

## 2. Films Produced through Burmah Shell Calcutta

**The Grand Trunk Road.** This is a film of transport in India. It takes as its theme the story of "The Grand Trunk Road" and shows how this road serves industry, tourist traffic, places of pilgrimage, and the villages.

## 3. Edited Items supplied to Messrs. 20th Century Fox for their Newsreel

Italian prisoners being landed at Bombay.

All India Cattle Show, New Delhi.

Census.

4. Films made by the Studios, on which the "Indian Film Unit" worked at various stages  
Here Comes the Letter.

The Awakening.

Towards India's Defence.

Careless Talk.

Nazi Rule.

## 5. Films in Production

**Defence Forces.** Material for this film has all been shot, except for an Indian Air Force sequence which it is hoped to include.

**'V' for Victory.** This film has been scripted and scheduled to go into production.

**A Day in the Life of a District Officer.** This film is to show the work done by an Indian District Officer. After consultation with the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay, shooting will start.

**Agriculture.** A film on modern scientific agriculture in India. Some of the material has been shot and research work has been done on the whole subject. It is to show how agricultural developments help villages and it is to include a sequence on the Sukkur Barrage.

# SCOTTISH CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY

ONE OF the features of the educational film movement in Scotland during the past three years has been the tremendous expansion of the Scottish Central Film Library. The increase of output is best shown by the following statistics giving the number of films despatched each month from the Library since it began operations in March, 1939.

|           | 1939 | 1940  | 1941              |
|-----------|------|-------|-------------------|
| January   | —    | 356   | 1,406             |
| February  | —    | 467   | 1,706             |
| March     | 87   | 512   | 1,931             |
| April     | 54   | 489   | 1,217             |
| May       | 183  | 706   | 1,500             |
| June      | 179  | 696   | 1,662             |
| July      | 17   | 195   | 786               |
| August    | 35   | 106   | 727               |
| September | 74   | 432   | 1,181             |
| October   | 183  | 1,104 | 2,533             |
| November  | 286  | 1,476 | 3,302             |
| December  | 353  | 1,403 | not yet available |

The Library's growth is the more remarkable in view of the fact that it has operated throughout under the severe handicaps occasioned by the war.

# THE GIANT SHINNIES DOWN THE BEANSTALK

By THEODORE STRAUSS

An interview with Robert Flaherty reprinted from the New York paper "P.M."

THE GIANT was in a jovial mood. Despite the fact that a commiserating waiter was bringing distressing minute-by-minute reports on the backward progress of the Dodgers, Robert Flaherty continued to scatter his dollars like chaff—probably to bolster his own failing confidence—in even money on "dem bums." But when the cataclysmic blow finally fell, Mr. Flaherty's shaggy white head was only momentarily bowed. Raising his flagon with a full-blooded oath that would have rent the veil in a tabernacle he was shortly launched on the reasons why Hollywood morticians are the wildest *entrepreneurs* at large. Laughter shook his mighty frame like an inner tempest. The Dodgers

had lost? "I am absolutely heartbroken," he said sincerely, but already his mirth was erupting. He had thought of another story.

Listening to Robert Flaherty one listened to a great romantic and a great romancer. Put him in a cassock and you might have had Friar Tuck—a great tumbling man with massive red cheeks, brilliant blue eyes and the sharp profile of an eagle. His size was matched only by the exuberance of his wit; he tossed ideas like an agile bull lifts the matador. A born raconteur, he talked fabulously out of a memory shot full of colourful, bawdy and heroic reminiscence of all the places he had ever been, from the dangerous straits of Hudson Bay to the fragrant islands of the Pacific, from Mysore and the elephant hunts to the Aran Islands where they shoulder the northern sea. He talked like a man who had just finished a long and gruelling job.

In fact he had. It is nearly two years since Mr. Flaherty was summoned by Pare Lorentz and the then existing United States Film Service to make *The Land*; nearly two years since he returned to his homeland for the first time in a decade of wandering. It is nearly a year and a half since he loaded his cameras in a station wagon and set out to "rediscover" America. "It was really an exploration," he said.

To be sure, his journeys constantly "on location" were but part of the long, exhausting struggle that goes into the making of a Flaherty film. There were endless conferences with Wayne Darrow, head of information in the Agriculture Department, who, as Mr. Flaherty gratefully remembers, told him "Take your time and don't pull your punches." There were talks with such interested parties as Milo Perkins, and after

travelling 25,000 miles and exposing 100,000 feet of film began the cutting with Helen Van Dongen and the writing of the narration with Russel Lord—a task which Mr. Flaherty said had to be so accurate "that only an expensive corporation lawyer could write it."

"Actually," he said, "there wasn't any story. They gave me a camera and threw me out into the field to make a film about the land and the people that live by it. I was fresh and had no preconceptions whatever; I was so sensitive you could hear me change my mind. So I merely groped my way along, photographing what seemed to me significant; it was only later that we began to see the pattern. The film is different from my others. It isn't a romance. It hasn't any specific solution for what the camera sees, but it is often critical. And that perhaps is the most amazing thing about it, that it could be made at all. It shows that democracy can face itself in the mirror without flinching."

For what Mr. Flaherty met and saw and heard and photographed was often grim. He saw eroded, desolate lands nearly equal in area to the size of Germany, France and England combined. From the rich harvests of the Minnesota river valleys he turned southward, where the long dusty roads were often clotted with migrants too weak to work even if they found it. Elsewhere, in the midlands, he met farmers who boasted of having worn out five or six farms in their lifetimes—and then he saw farms that had been left behind, the rat-infested shells of empty houses. And again the straggling pilgrims on the dusty roads.

But just as ominous was the terrible face of the machine. He watched the automatic corn-husker that robbed the rows with blind efficiency, the cotton picker, watched by awestruck workers who hardly surmised its impact on their way of life, which did in twenty minutes what it took a man two days to accomplish. In Minnesota he saw an angle-dozer which cleared an acre of wooded, boulder-strewn land in an hour. The farmer who owned it had paid \$6,000 for it, cleared new land for his neighbours at five dollars an hour and was so proud of his machine that he wore a yachting cap at work.

"It is incredible," said Mr. Flaherty. "With one foot in Utopia, where the machine can free us all, we have yet to dominate it. That is the problem of our time—to conquer the machine. With it new modern countries have been developed in a matter of generations rather than centuries. In 1855 Japan, an almost medieval country, sent its first Ambassador to the Court of St. James attired in a suit of chain mail. Today it is one of the most highly industrialised countries in the world. The progress in this country is something that neither Washington nor Jefferson could have dreamed of. Today we stand at the threshold of a great calamity or a great new era. The decision is ours."

Did we say Mr. Flaherty was a romantic? He is. His feet still wear seven-league boots and there is still the aura of legend about his massive shoulders. He still hopes that a kindly deity will allow him some day to wander to the Mountains of the Moon, to the Himalayan back-country and China. But beneath his great gusto Mr. Flaherty has changed. His "rediscovery" has left its impress upon him. In facing what is the most primitive and most modern of our problems he has not escaped unmoved. Out of the seared hinterland of America he has emerged with what he believes to be his deepest and truest film.

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# THE BRAINS TRUST ON PROPAGANDA

## OR

# A LITTLE PRACTICAL HELP FOR THE M.O.I.

Reprinted by the courtesy of the B.B.C.

MCCULLOUGH: The next question comes from Mr. Hudson, who is in Queen Mary Hospital, Roehampton. He asks: "Why is propaganda so much more successful when it stirs up hatred than when it tries to stir up friendly feeling?"

CAMPBELL: Mind you, I think propaganda a very deadly weapon, and in the ordinary way, propaganda has an object, and it is much easier to point to something and get people to hate it, I think, than to get them to think well of it. If you've got something there, say either—any particular thing—a person or a creed, it's quite easy to use words to make them hate it, or much easier to make them care for it. So propaganda seems to me to be much easier on the evil side—in fact I think it is one of the most evil things in the world today. If we could get rid of propaganda, the world would be a much better world, I think; and it seems to be always directed to the evil side of things, because that's a definite object as against a sort of nebulous good object. That's the impression I get of propaganda.

MCCULLOUGH: Thank you. Lord De La Warr?

DE LA WARR: I think the question is based really on a half truth. We all of us as human beings have our—what we call our friendly side and our more hostile side. Take it in the case of (here the remainder of this sentence was inaudible because of someone coughing) . . . in countries where we develop the friendly side to a very considerable degree, it's to some extent at the expense of suppressing the more hostile side, which then can very easily be appealed to at given moments, by propaganda. But similarly, I think if you took a country; take Germany, where the hate side has been developed very strongly, one hopes sooner or later certainly, for the future happiness of this world, at some time that the moment may come, ruined by propaganda, when we can haul out the friendly side that's been suppressed there.

JOAD: Well, you know there is a very good definition of propaganda which says that you can always propagate a propaganda if you have the "proper geese". Now of all creatures known to man, the goose is the most indignant and the most given to hatred. I've often wondered whether that is what's at the basis of the proverb. I think that the real answer is this—that propaganda is successful in so far as it appeals—is it to the highest common factor or the lowest common multiple—I never can remember which—but whichever it is, to human feelings. Now I think the feeling of hatred and anger, and the desire to hurt, tends to the lowest common multiple, or highest common factor. It's a thing which we tend all of us, perhaps to have in common, especially in wartime. Whereas feelings of kindness and compassion, and, perhaps let me add, of good sense and the desire for truth, are things in respect of which we differ. Above all, propa-

ganda which appeals to hatred and appeals to malice tends to appeal to more people than propaganda which appeals to, what you might call, the nobler emotions.

Addendum, December 21st, 1941.

JOAD: The last thing and most difficult of all—and I have no time to deal with it—our most unfortunate answer to that question about propaganda. We gave the impression, I think, that propaganda was most successful when it appealed to man's lowest feelings. It seems to me that this week presents us with one outstanding example to the contrary, namely, the message of peace and goodwill—propaganda wasn't it? It germinated from Bethlehem two thousand years ago, more honoured you will say in the breach than in the observance—well, I agree, in the present situation, much would justify such a view. You know it is not wholly true, not wholly true that nobody ever responds to the noble appeal. Let those who believe that the Christmas spirit means nothing at all read A Christmas Carol again and read it every Christmas. It does seem to me nonsense to say that nobody has ever been moved by an appeal to what's best or to take the risk of a noble hypothesis being for once true and then to act on that risk. It is precisely that willingness which at times has transfigured the whole face of society. Think, for example, of the propaganda for the abolition of the slave trade or think of the propaganda which has moved so many of us today—the propaganda to fight for freedom and for human dignity.

## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

The third session of the **Aberdeen Scientific Film Club** is now in full swing. Membership has not yet quite attained last year's record, but is regarded as very satisfactory at a time when ever-increasing demands are being made upon leisure time. The figure now stands at over two hundred. A new development not without significance is the affiliation to the club of the **Regional Field Naturalists' Association**.

Programmes so far have included, *Turn of the Furrow*, *Shipbuilding*, *Defeat Diphtheria*, *The Earthworm*, *Distillation*, *Volcanoes*, *Kensal House*, *Sex in Life*, and *The Great Tit*. Following up the plan of former sessions the audience were asked to award marks to the various films. Here are some of the results: *Volcanoes*, 60%; *Kensal House*, 63%; *Distillation*, 85%; *Sex in Life*, 90%; *The Great Tit*, 77%. Many of the scientists

present expressed the opinion that *Distillation*, considered from the point of view of the presentation of a subject requiring a considerable degree of technical understanding, was one of the most ingenious films that they had seen.

The **Workers' Educational Association** have this winter experimented with a film show as part of their programme. On the 18th of last month Mrs. Nan Clow, of the **Aberdeen S.F.C.**, took a show of scientific films to Fraserburgh. Silent films only could be used but a varied programme was shown including *The House Fly*, *Arabia and Islam*, *Volcanoes*, and *The Making of Stained Glass*. It is expected that further developments in this direction will take place. For the last programme of the present year the **S.F.C.** intend to show *The Development of Railways*, *Crystals*, *Malaria*, *First Principles of Lubrication*, and *The Fern*.

If these programmes show anything they show how quickly a film society working over a number of years consumes the existing first-class scientific films. Why are there so few films on technical subjects like *Distillation*, and endless pseudo-geographical films which almost invariably get adverse criticisms? Some knowledgeable person might through the good offices of the **D.N.L.** inform us where the fault lies.

The **Ayrshire Scientific Film Society**, after one year's successful operation in Ayr, has recently expanded its activities and now covers six centres throughout the County. This development has been occasioned by the almost embarrassing demand from other County towns for information and guidance on the formation of Societies. So great was the enthusiasm that Dr. George Dunlop, Secretary of the Ayr Society, undertook the heavy job of showing a programme of scientific films at Troon, Kilmarnock, Ardrossan, Prestwick and Dalmellington, in addition to the normal Ayr show, all during one week, to test the possibilities of the situation. Result—Societies formed at Ardrossan, Prestwick and Dalmellington. The response at Troon did not justify continuing. At Kilmarnock, the hall was packed.

In addition to the centres mentioned, requests to be included in the scheme were received from an army encampment and an **R.A.F.** station. This was agreed to. In all, therefore, six centres with a total membership to date of over 600, are having fortnightly shows—quite a pleasing situation. The possibilities of further expansion are good. While each of the centres now formed will be a distinct Society, it became evident after the second meeting that some form of co-ordination was necessary. An *ad hoc* committee, consisting of two members from each Society has been appointed to consider (a) formation of a County federation, (b) immediate co-ordination of film bookings to prevent overlapping.

So much for the recent history of the **Scientific Film Movement** in Ayrshire. What of the problems now raised? Of all the difficulties, choice of films will now be the greatest. While Ayr was the only centre, the membership was fairly well classified under the following sections (a) agriculture, (b) medicine, (c) laymen interested in any or all aspects of science. This being so, films were chosen from within fairly narrow limits, with occasional diversions to nature films. What now? Membership of the new Societies embraces all branches of science from chemistry to anthropology, from engineering to dietetics, from paleontology to micro-biology. A single booking of films passed on each night from Society to

(Continued on page 14)

## SHORT FILM BOOKINGS FOR JAN.-FEB.

*The following bookings for January and February are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association:—*

|                                     | Week<br>commencing |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| A Letter from Cairo                 |                    |
| Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth   | Jan. 25th          |
| Alive in the Deep                   |                    |
| The News Theatre, Leeds             | 26th               |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | Feb. 2nd           |
| All's Well                          |                    |
| The News Theatre, Leeds             | Jan. 26th          |
| American Spoken Here                |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Manchester          | Feb. 18th          |
| Back Street                         |                    |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | Feb. 2nd           |
| Bundles for Britain                 |                    |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | Feb. 9th           |
| Capital City of Washington, D.C.    |                    |
| News Theatre, Bristol               | 1st                |
| News Theatre, Leeds                 | 2nd                |
| Caribbean Sentinel                  |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Manchester          | 1st                |
| City Bound                          |                    |
| News Theatre, Leeds                 | 2nd                |
| Dances of the U.S.S.R.              |                    |
| The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne | 1st                |
| Donald's Lucky Day                  |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Leeds               | 2nd                |
| Feathers                            |                    |
| Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth   | Jan. 25th          |
| Feminine Fitness                    |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Chester             | 26th               |
| Fishing Fever                       |                    |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | Feb. 2nd           |
| Forbidden Passage                   |                    |
| Tatler Theatre Chester              | Jan. 26th          |
| Garden Spot of the North            |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Birmingham          | Feb. 1st           |
| News Theatre, Manchester            | 8th                |
| His Tale                            |                    |
| News Theatre, Nottingham            | 8th                |
| Isles of Fate                       |                    |
| News Theatre, Birmingham            | 8th                |
| News Theatre, Manchester            | 8th                |
| Jungle Arches                       |                    |
| News Theatre, Bristol               | Jan. 25th          |
| Kangaroo Country                    |                    |
| News Theatre, Nottingham            | 25th               |
| Land of Alaska Nellie               |                    |
| Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth   | Feb. 8th           |
| Land of the Maple Leaf              |                    |
| Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow               | Jan. 25th          |
| Man and the Enigma                  |                    |
| News Theatre, Birmingham            | 25th               |
| March of Time, No. 5                |                    |
| Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow               | Feb. 1st           |
| March of Time, No. 7                |                    |
| Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow               | 8th                |
| Tatler Theatre, Manchester          | 8th                |
| March of Time, No. 8                |                    |
| Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth   | Feb. 8th           |
| Meet the Stars, No. 4               |                    |
| News Theatre, Leeds                 | 9th                |
| Miracle of Hydro                    |                    |
| Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth   | 1st                |
| Playing with Neptune                |                    |
| News Theatre, Birmingham            | 1st                |
| Please Answer                       |                    |
| News Theatre, Birmingham            | 8th                |
| Quiz Biz                            |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Birmingham          | 8th                |
| Return of the Horse                 |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Manchester          | Jan. 25th          |
| Russian Salad                       |                    |
| Premier News Theatre, Bournemouth   | 18th               |
| Scottish Symphony                   |                    |
| News Theatre, Nottingham            | Feb. 1st           |
| Stranger than Fiction               |                    |
| News Theatre, Nottingham            | Feb. 1st           |
| The Battle                          |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Manchester          | Jan. 25th          |
| News Theatre, Birmingham            | Feb. 1st           |
| The News Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne | 8th                |
| News Theatre, Leeds                 | 9th                |
| The Farmer's Wife                   |                    |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | Jan. 26th          |
| The Great Awakening                 |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Leeds               | Feb. 2nd           |
| The Green Girdle                    |                    |
| Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow               | 1st                |
| The Serving Army                    |                    |
| News Theatre, Nottingham            | 8th                |
| This Place Australia                |                    |
| Tatler Theatre, Manchester          | Jan. 25th          |
| Two for the Zoo                     |                    |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | Feb. 2nd           |
| You the People                      |                    |
| The Tatler Theatre, Chester         | 9th                |
| World's Last Stand                  |                    |
| News Theatre, Leeds                 | Jan. 26th          |



# STRAND FILMS

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# FILM SOCIETY NEWS

**Belfast Film Institute** reports that two shows have so far been held, both in the Grosvenor Hall, Belfast, which for two seasons has been the only meeting place available to the Society. Although the accommodation has been spartan, and sound and vision reproduction below the standard of the usual cinema, the Society has been able to carry on, and the last two shows have been very successful. Renoir's *La Marseillaise* at the first show and *Chapayev* at the second, were attractive for their political message at the time, and both films attracted many people not before interested in the Society's work. Supporting films for the second show were the Polish abstract *Three Studies from Chopin*, *Northern Outpost* and the Point of View film *Is Idleness a Vice?*—well worth showing for its entertainment value.

For the third show the Society had a tremendous stroke of luck. A cinema had become available for the Society's use—a new and comfortable house of just the right size, within easy reach of the city centre. This was so welcome that we are confident the future of the Society will be much more secure. The programme for the third show included Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*, an example of a serious film in a surrealist manner, and an early Marx Brothers crazy comedy—*Monkey Business*. The Committee have great expectations of arousing interest by such violent contrasts of styles and subjects.

**The Aberdeen Film Society** has decided to continue its activities for the present season and to hold at least six performances. In order to enable those members who have undertaken A.R.P., Civil Defence and Home Guard duties, and also those in the Services, to attend the exhibitions of the Society, kind permission has been granted by the magistrates to hold afternoon and evening performances throughout the season. The same films will be shown at the afternoon and evening sessions. The first exhibition was held on 12th October when the films *Ignace*, *Tommy Atkins*, *Scene in Bali* and *Marshland Birds* were shown. The second performance of the Society was given on 16th November and the films exhibited were *Retour à l'Aube*, *Border Weave*, *Robber Kitten* and *It Comes from Coal*. The date of the next performance was 14th December and the films screened were *La Grande Illusion* and *Water Birds*.

The membership for the present season is 352, which is considered very gratifying in view of the fact that a large number of old members are serving in H.M. Forces.

**Tyneside Film Society.** The first part of the season, consisting of four film shows held on Sunday afternoons in the Haymarket Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been successfully completed, the membership being about 750. The programme for December 7th was *When the Pie Was Opened* (Lye), *And So to Work* (Massingham), and *Lenin in October*; and on December 14th *The Plow that Broke the Plains* (Lorentz), *Modern Inventions* (Disney) and *Le Bonheur*. It is hoped to continue the season with four further exhibitions. These will definitely be held if

sufficient subscriptions are obtained in advance, the dates planned being February 1st and 15th and March 1st and 15th. Among the feature films under consideration are *Retour à l'Aube*, *Chapayev*, and *Circonstances Atténuantes*.

**Cambridge University Film Society** reports that a further set of three shows is scheduled for the Lent Term, in addition to two talks. *The Rich Bride* is proposed for the first show as an example of a light modern Russian film. On February 1st Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* is to be shown, provided that it can be licensed by the local magistrates, together with *The River*. Basil Wright, President of the Society, has promised to speak on "Films and Propaganda" on February 8th, and on February 15th Cavalcanti's new *Film and Reality* is due to be shown, provided that a copy is ready in time. On February 22nd *The Last Laugh* and excerpts from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* are to be shown in connection with a discussion by Karl Mayer and Paul Rotha.

**The Edinburgh Film Guild**, continuing its interesting policy of "specially built" programmes, showed on November 30th a series of Czecho-Slovakian films, including *Prague*, *Games of Slovak Children*, *Czecho-Slovaks March On*, and the Czech feature film *Pred Maturitou*, directed by Linneman. On December 14th part of the programme was devoted to "Contrasts in Comedy" with examples from Chaplin, Disney and Benchley. The feature was *Accord Final*.

**The Manchester Film Institute Society** and the **Manchester and Salford Film Society** continue their policy of joint film shows of a progressive and ingenious nature. On December 14th *Le Dernier Tournant* was the feature. For the spring season, beginning on January 25th, the features will include *We from Kronstadt*, *Innocence*, *La Tendre Ennemie* and *Alexander Nevski*. The specialised show on December 6th was devoted to "Films of Science" with a very representative programme. Future shows include the B.F.I.'s *Film and Reality* and *New Babylon*.

The objects of the **Irish Film Society**, notes on which we are glad to include on this page for the first time, are the development of film appreciation in Ireland, presentations to its members of the best artistic and educational films of all countries, promotion of the study of film-making, and of a high standard of film production in Ireland, and such other activities as are relevant thereto. During each season it is customary for the Society to arrange eight presentations of outstanding films from all countries—films most of which, for various reasons, never reach the ordinary commercial cinemas. The programmes for the first five years have included such pictures as *Westfront 1918*, *Nibelungen Saga*, *Kermesse Heroique*, *Un Carnet de Bal*, *The River*, *The Cheat*, *Quai des Brumes*, *Peter the Great*, *Dood Water* and *La Grande Illusion*. Representative shorts have also been shown. Recent shows have included *Episode* (with Paula Wessely), the Russian film *White Nights of St. Petersburg*, Guitry's *Remontons Les Champs Elysées*, and *Lac aux Dames*. Lectures are also given from time to time on various social, educational and aesthetic aspects of the film. For those interested in

amateur film work, courses are held at the studio headquarters of the Society each year in which all the processes of film work are dealt with in a practical fashion. A permanent film unit of the Society also carries out experimental production of short films. It is hoped to expand the work of the Society during the coming season in the spheres of educational films, film writing and film making. The Society is anxious to know if any members would be interested in the opportunity of carrying out practical work of experiment and record in these directions. Much scope for teachers lies in the study of the film in relation to the child, and, apart from the development of the specifically educational film, much can be done for the citizen of tomorrow in building up a fine taste in films. It is hoped to build up a library of films, stills and statistics, which will be of help to those interested in the development of native films.

The Secretary of the **Dundee and St. Andrews Film Society** writes: "The first half of our Season concluded on Sunday, 14th December, with the feature film *Nous Les Jeunes*, and our activities recommenced on Sunday, January 11th. Since I last reported on our membership there has been a further substantial increase and the total number of members enrolled has reached a new high record total of 936. It is very gratifying to find the Council's decision to carry on during war-time has been so amply justified. There have been many requests for Russian films, but some difficulty has been experienced in booking arrangements and it may not be until late in the season that Russian films will be available. During this season it is our aim to present feature films of different countries presenting as diversified a list as possible, and during the first five performances the feature films have been three French, one Austrian, one Czechoslovakian and one American. For one performance an experiment was tried of presenting two feature films instead of the feature film and a selection of shorts, and this change proved quite popular; but during the rest of the season the practice of showing one feature film will be adhered to."

**Scottish Churches Film Guild (Glasgow Branch)** reports that transport difficulties prevented the monthly review of Religious films taking place at the usual meeting in December, but the Secretary was able to obtain substitutes which proved very interesting. Four short Ministry of Information films were shown—*Living with Strangers*, an evacuee picture with ample scope for social service work; it was considered a very good film and quite useful. *The New Britain*, another social service film, but lacking any indication of the religious life of the country. *Neighbours under Fire*, the best of the films under review from the religious aspect; all and sundry find shelter where a Rector is awaiting them and starts a "sing-song" to while away the waiting time. *Welfare of the Workers*, for social service purposes this film was considered quite insufficient, and it was overloaded with the subject-matter shown. The speech at the end was over-emphasised and had little to do with either the "Welfare of the Workers" or social service. The general opinion was that this was more of a propaganda or "Go to It" film than either welfare or social service.

A pleasing feature of the recent meetings of the Guild is the good attendance of members, who are taking a keen interest in the criticism of the films.

# TECHNICOLOR BY A NEW PROCESS

Reprinted by courtesy of *Kinematograph Weekly*

Warner Bros. have a Technicolor subject *King of the Turf*, which has been made by a new process, the film having been shot on Kodachrome, and enlarged to 35 mm. The technique employed is felt by many people to mean a revolution in colour work in the studio.

Ever since the introduction of the improved three-colour Technicolor with its magnificent results on the screen, the Technicolor Corporation has been setting its research workers the task of endeavouring to discover a really efficient taking process which would avoid the huge demand upon film stock and the high lighting costs which the triple film camera requires in the studio.

It was obvious to most workers that the integral colour-layer system promised the most hopeful line of research, but that this type of film could not be employed upon costly film studio sets until it had been so far improved as to make certain of correct colour renderings on 35-mm. prints.

## 16-mm. Kodachrome Negative

Patience and industry have reaped their reward, and at the present moment 35-mm. release prints are being made from negatives originally

shot on 16-mm. Kodachrome in a major studio for general release in moving picture theatres.

Experts declare that the technique employed in the new Technicolor process means a revolutionary step in the recording of colour, and that among the results which will follow will be a far sharper picture upon the screen and enhanced colour values.

It is generally known that the Kodachrome process, introduced at first to supply amateur cinematographers with a colour film which, upon reversal, would supply a single copy for screening, is of the integral layer type in which three differently sensitised layers are processed with colour formers to produce the resultant colour image.

## Interlocking Patents

The use of Kodachrome in Technicolor was made easier by the fact that Eastman Kodak and Technicolor have an interchange patent agreement which makes it possible for each to use the other's patents under licence. The new step gets rid of the rather clumsy Technicolor camera with its three negatives, and enables shooting to be done much as in black and white once the correct lighting balance has been secured.

At the moment the subjects shot by this method have been theatrical shorts, industrial and documentary films, but there is nothing to prevent its extension to the feature film, the enlarged picture having the inherent optical qualities of the straight 16-mm. picture.

## Enlarging the Original

The Kodachrome negative having been shot the next step is to "blow up" the picture into three selectively filtered colour-separation negatives from which the matrices are made in the usual way in order that the three-colour positive may be printed from it.

The resultant 35-mm. picture is stated to have a good tonal range as a result of control in the printing laboratory, blacks and whites being uncommonly good with a worth-while range of colour. It is not claimed that the colour is yet equal to the best 35-mm. Technicolor prints, the lee-way is small and further research will probably make great improvements.

## Better Depth of Field

In one direction an improvement is claimed, viz., depth of field. In the "blown-up" Kodachrome picture the depth of field was far beyond any previous 35-mm. Technicolor print, the result being entirely unexpected. It is stated that the steadiness of picture was also a surprise to many Technicians, who had looked upon the 16-mm. camera as not affording the necessary stability standard for a commercial picture.

Another pleasant surprise was in the definition of the picture which it was thought might lose in this respect as the result of the duping and enlarging which the process involved.

Whereas with black and white 16-mm. copies blown up to 35-mm. grain difficulties might arise, with Technicolor this does not exist owing to the fact that practically no silver grain is present, the picture being recorded in deposits of the various dyes.

## "Living Movement" . . .

CARLYLE defined Progress in just those two words! In paying due tribute to the aptness of the sage's definition the *Kinematograph Weekly* translates the spirit into action. Current events are reported for our readers in relation to the general advance, artistic and technical, by which progress in Kinematography is achieved.

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## SCIENTIFIC FILM SOCIETIES

(Continued from page 11)

Society, as at present, will probably have to go by the board. A half-yearly or yearly viewing week attended by representatives from each centre, at which bookings and plans could be made well ahead and co-ordinated where possible, may form a solution to the difficulty.

A second problem facing each society is lack of sound projectors. At the moment each depends on the goodwill of private owners, a situation tolerable to both parties in the initial stages of formation but likely to create difficulties if continued indefinitely. At present, search is being made for a projector for purchase as the common property of the centres, so far with little result.

The London Scientific Film Society opens its fourth season at 2.30 p.m. on the 31st January at the Imperial Institute Theatre, South Kensington. The first show, which has been organised in conjunction with the Socialist Medical Association, covers "Medicine in War," and further programmes will be announced in due course. Full particulars of membership may be obtained from the Secretary, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1.

# NATIONAL SAVINGS PUBLICITY

By W. BUCHANAN-TAYLOR, Honorary Publicity Adviser to the National Savings Movement, who is responsible for the production and supervision of National Savings Committee films.

WHEN is a door not a door? In the old days of show business the answer was "When it is ajar."

The door of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is ajar—as it should be and sometimes is not. Readers may want to know how the National Savings Committee managed to raise in two years the sum of £1,115,306,106 from what are known as the "small savers." Some of those readers may not be particularly interested, if by any chance it was not altogether due to the use of film propaganda. To satisfy this specialised appetite I intend to deal with the film side first and leave the other manifold elements for later discussion in the special phraseology of the "befuddled mind of an old advertising nark"—to quote that precious bit from a recent DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER paragraph.

I feel I must somehow justify some of the "fatuous National Savings spreads" so beloved of the editorial staff of this Journal. Well, we started on the track of public money in September, 1939, armed with a permanent staff sized to peace time needs. When I say we—I mean the honorary advisory publicity wallahs—S. C. Leslie and myself. And I should add, six advertising agencies—a spread-over which was calculated to give us the product of six brains and at the same time do justice to the advertising business, then in a position of parlous prospects. Neither Leslie nor I were concerned with the agency side of advertising, but with advertising itself.

Professor Keynes and some other economic pundits figured that the outside edge of small-saver savings would work out at £400,000,000 per year. Many high-ups in the biggest City financial scheme put it at £150,000,000 per year and a few slightly higher than that. In the first year the produce was over £475,000,000 from the "little man" in restricted Securities—the unit maximum being £375 for Savings Certificates and £1,000 for Defence Bonds.

How was it done? I believe it was done chiefly through publicity—in all its branches. The part which films played in the record achievement is difficult to measure, since in the first six or eight months we had to depend upon the goodwill and understanding of the newsreel companies. And here I want to pay tribute to them. True, they were a concern already in action and their machinery was going full tilt. The documentary element was still thinking in terms of 10 minute and 20 minute shows. They were still going along in their own sweet way, some of them loftily insisting that that was the only way. The de-elasticising of the documentary mind was a slow process. The newsreel folk jumped in with the shorter short—and filled the bill. Not only did the newsreels help us very greatly in their weekly issues, but they made shorts for us which were realistic and, we believe, effective.

Then came the making of the shorter shorts—a limit of five minutes being fixed as between the

Ministry of Information and the C.E.A. People in and close-by the film trade will know that not all the shorts made for Government propaganda were accepted or shown. In many cases exhibitors, conserving their rights, felt their territory was being encroached upon. They set themselves up as judges of what was best for their patrons—customers who paid to be entertained and amused and not necessarily to be preached at in varying terms—week by week. The big circuits were on the whole kinder than the independents, but even they had managers whose attitude towards propaganda was not whole-heartedly approving. Some averred that the material was in many cases not worthy of being placed alongside the booked material of entertainment calibre. And in many cases they were right.

It must be remembered that the new and shorter short demanded condensation of story. Not unnaturally some of the earlier efforts were somewhat bald, but condensation in all the arts is one of the most difficult processes. How many journals even of the same genre are comparable with the Readers' Digest? As a nation we have been devoted to elaboration of wordage. Gladstone as a public speaker and many popular authors established a vogue which is only now beginning to diminish. From a ten minute to a five minute short required a process of condensation beyond the immediate grasp of most producers. Like all experts who had become set they had to learn and profit by practice.

The National Savings Movement were quick to realise the need for co-ordinating with the exhibitors, even though distribution of their products was in the hands of the M.O.I. Of the necessity for informing even the entertainment seeking public of their national duties there could be no doubt. And the cinema, depending for its livelihood on the nation's efforts at preservation, was as much entitled to assist as were the several thousand newspapers which for the best of all reasons regularly published free editorials on Government requirements—recruiting, rationing, saving and the rest. The exhibitor is inclined to the *riposte* that the newspapers get paid advertising and therefore are entitled to give a *quid pro quo*. That is the old and outworn theory. Newspapers do not give paragraphs to advertisers; in fact the average editorial controller represents the suggestion. Of course there are certain mean journals which indulge in the practice, but they are so few that they don't matter.

From the start we tried to make those responsible for distribution appreciate the value of a title—not a continuous label which proclaimed the propaganda character of the film. We sought to get our publicity by more or less indirect methods—presenting our shorts, as feature items are presented and placing the credit titles—National Savings, and M.O.I. as distributors—at the end. To go into a cinema lobby to find on the time-table the simple and unconvincing announcement "M.O.I." meant literally nothing. Even now, I believe, the title of a Government film is rarely announced in bill matter or on the time-sheet.

Since November 22nd, 1939, we have produced fourteen shorts and trailers in connection with War Savings. We have two in technicolor—one *The Savings Song* in which Jack Hylton and his Band appeared with the Aspidochelons and George Baker, and *The Volunteer Worker*, with Donald Duck, presented to us by Walt Disney. We were first in the field of Government propaganda with technicolor. The current National Savings films are *Give Us More Ships* (Gilbert

Frankau, Leslie Banks, George Posford and Geraldo's Concert Orchestra contributing, and produced by Harold Purcell, Merton Park Studios); *Sam Pepys Joins the Navy* (Gaumont-British); *The Owner Goes Aloft* (Ivan Scott, Spectator); *The Volunteer Worker* (Walt Disney: Donald Duck); *Seaman Frank* (Frank Laskier returning to sea; Derrick de Marney, Concanen Recordings, Ltd., with commentary by Terence de Marney and Laskier himself). The Laskier short goes out immediately on its news value and because the C.E.A. executive after seeing it asked for quick release.

All the material we have produced has been adapted for the 15 mobile cinemas, which are in charge of my colleague, Sir Albert Clavering. A punctilious calculation and check shows that since April, 1940, over eight million people have seen the film displays on these vans.

The press advertising, posters, leaflets and exhibitions (of which there are several) have played a highly important part in the building up of War Savings propaganda. They have all been produced by expert advertising men. It will be a miraculous moment when all people agree upon the mould, quality and efficacy of any one particular advertisement or poster design. Those in the advertising business are always painfully aware of what's wrong with everybody else's products. But the amateur, non-advertising pundit, who is usually an indifferent performer in his own line, transcends all others in his critical certitude. That may be why the DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER being in the Documentary line is so abundantly qualified to criticise the work of advertising experts for National Savings. There's magic in a thousand million pounds—unless it was merely an automatic contribution. May it not be that in our midst are several "old Documentary narks"?

## SIGHT and SOUND

### Film Appreciation Number

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Published by: The British Film Institute,  
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# FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made.

F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

**Association of Scientific Workers**, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

**Austin Film Library**. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Australian Trade Publicity Film Library**. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3, sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

**British Commercial Gas Association**, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

**British Council Film Department**, 25 Savile Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

**British Film Institute**, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (a) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16mm. Sd. & St. H. (b) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**British Instructional Films**, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; Pathé Gazettes and Pathetones; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Canadian Pacific Film Library**. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity**. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

**Central Council for Health Education**. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*.

35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

**Central Film Library**, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Coal Utilisation Joint Council**, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Crookes' Laboratories**, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Dartington Hall Film Unit**, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

**Dominion of New Zealand Film Library**. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

**Educational Films Bureau**, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Educational General Services**, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

**Electrical Development Association**, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Empire Film Library**. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Film Centre**, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

**Ford Film Library**, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Gaumont-British Equipments**, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**G.P.O. Film Library**. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Kodak, Ltd.**, Kingsway, W.C.2. (a) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (b) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

**March of Time**, Dean House, 4 Dean Street W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *Battle Fleets of Britain*, *Canada at War*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**Mathematical Films**. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

**Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd.**, Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

**Pathescope**, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Petroleum Films Bureau**, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

**Religious Film Library**, Church Walk, Dunsstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Scottish Central Film Library**, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Sound-Film Services**, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

**South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau**, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

**Southern Railway**, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

**Wallace Heaton, Ltd.**, 127 New Bond Street W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

**Workers' Film Association, Ltd.** Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.